



Terms of Reference

Final Evaluation ALERT Project

The ALERT consortium has designed technology for improving the way humanitarian agencies prepare for and respond to disasters. ALERT is a three-year initiative ending in March 2018, funded by the START NETWORK Disasters and Emergency Preparedness Programme (DEPP). These are the Terms of Reference (ToR) for this final process evaluation of the project.

1. Background

Context

The ALERT project is a START Network project led by HelpAge International and supported by a consortium of humanitarian agencies and academic institutions (Islamic Relief, Handicap International, Care International, Concern Worldwide, HelpAge International, Coventry University). With support from the Department for International Development (DFID), the ALERT project is part of an ambitious suite of projects joined together as the Disasters and Emergency Preparedness Programme (DEPP) which is designed to develop decentralized initiatives to capacity building and to improve the quality and speed of humanitarian response in countries at risk of natural disaster or conflict related emergencies.

Being prepared to respond to an emergency is essential to reducing disaster related deaths and suffering. Whilst humanitarian agencies have made significant progress in their approaches to emergency preparedness, evidence suggests that they continue to be inadequately prepared to respond within the first hours of a disaster striking.

Project Objectives

The ALERT Consortium is embarking on an innovative journey, which aims to have universally accessible benefits, shaping the future of disaster preparedness and increasing the speed of disaster response.

ALERT is a disaster preparedness system that integrates new disaster preparedness processes with technology for information management and collaboration that has been designed collaboratively by humanitarian response agencies.

The aim of the project is to improve emergency preparedness in six trial countries, to prove the concept of ALERT as a solution for planning, managing and maintaining high levels of emergency preparedness.

Since July 2017 the Platform has been rolled out and stakeholders set up and trained in its use. The subsequent use of the Platform and feedback from that use has fed into a final version of the software currently in development.

Training and testing has taken place in four countries (Philippines, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Kenya) and is still to take place in one (Mozambique), as well as at an International level with donors and INGO headquarters.

How the Platform Operates

The ALERT software platform aims to ease the burden of emergency preparedness by providing an information management system for the entire preparedness process. As a transparent system, humanitarian agencies (including international NGOs, national NGOs, local actors and donors) will have the capability to see and collaborate on the preparedness planning information of their country offices, partners and other agencies.

The steps incorporated in the preparedness process are:

- Risk identification and risk indicator monitoring
- Scenario development and planning for the first stage of a response
- Creating and maintaining minimum preparedness actions
- Creating advanced preparedness actions (initial response activities)
- Managing communication in the event of imminent disaster situations

Additionally, the ALERT project aims to develop evidence in support of the following four 'proof of concept' statements:

- 1) ALERT makes NGO emergency preparedness more effective, leading to faster and more efficient decision making systems for emergency response.
- 2) ALERT can provide the necessary information for donors to make better informed, earlier and more equitable funding decisions in times of crisis and in times of 'peace'.
- 3) National and local NGOs that use ALERT are more likely to be included and have more opportunities to participate in inter-agency emergency response and preparedness systems.
- 4) ALERT can enable more coordinated and collaborative emergency preparedness activity (e.g. risk monitoring).

2. Rationale and purpose of the evaluation

The ALERT project ends in March 2018, a final external evaluation of ALERT is hence planned in early 2018 with the aim of assessing how and in what ways the intervention has worked. This analysis of strengths and weaknesses of the project shall be followed by the formulation of actionable recommendations in view of further strengthening implementation during any second phase follow on project.

The purpose of this final evaluation is threefold:

- To assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the ALERT planning and implementation,
- To provide accountability to ALERT's various stakeholders, in particular to the project consortium members and ALERT's donor, START NETWORK, DEPP, DFID.
- To identify lessons learned and generate knowledge to START NETWORK and to inform the development of future projects that support emergency preparedness in the humanitarian sector; such initiatives are multiplying both within HelpAge International and other agencies, and all lessons and recommendations on ALERT's process shall be of great value for these projects.

Primary users of the evaluation results are the following:

- HelpAge International ALERT staff and consortium and supporting partners implementing the ALERT project
- Other HelpAge International staff (global and in-country) who are supporting ALERT
- START NETWORK, DEPP and DFID.

Secondary users of the evaluation results will be the following:

- Other agencies / initiatives that are supporting emergency preparedness

Scope of the evaluation:

The evaluation will encompass the ALERT project from the project start until the moment of the country visits by the evaluator(s).

3. Specific object and objectives of the evaluation

The object is a final evaluation of the ALERT project, as described in the approved ALERT proposal, the revised logframe and ALERT project MEL framework.

The specific objectives of the evaluation are:

- To review the design and implementation of the ALERT project during its lifespan, looking at the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of its activities, assessing whether the use of resources is proving to be effective and efficient, and analysing whether the organisational systems and capacities of the ALERT project, consortium members and supporting partners are appropriate for achieving the intended project objectives.
- To identify, formulate and share good practices, lessons and strategic, actionable recommendations with the ALERT team, consortium members and supporting partners, on both programmatic and project management aspects. Suggestions on how the ALERT project could have been done differently shall also be provided (information to be used for the potential replication of ALERT's approach and process, by HelpAge International or other stakeholders).
- To stimulate reflections and learning among ALERT teams, supporting partners, HelpAge International country offices, including learning from failures and challenges.

4. Key questions of the evaluation

The proposal should reference the evaluation criteria against which the intervention will be assessed (e.g. relevance, effectiveness¹, efficiency, impact and/or sustainability) and refer to the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative's Guidance for DEPP project-level final evaluations and Indicators for preparedness activities and Capacity Building attached in annex.

¹ All projects should consider incorporating an evaluation question to assess effectiveness, essential for the project and programme evaluation

The main questions to be answered by the process evaluation are the following:

Relevance: (e.g. to the overall goal or outcome) and appropriateness (e.g. evaluate inputs and activities) of the project to the local context and implementing agency.

- What is the emerging evidence of:
 - (i) the ALERT partner agencies using the ALERT system to coordinate and complement humanitarian preparedness? (ii) the developed ALERT Emergency Preparedness System being accessible to humanitarian actors? (iii) the developed ALERT Emergency Preparedness System incorporating key preparedness components? (iv) the developed ALERT Emergency Preparedness System being easy to use?

Effectiveness: assessing the extent to which outputs contribute to achieving outcomes. This shall involve an examination of the main reasons why the intervention achieved or did not achieve particular objectives, including the process by which the change was brought about and the suitability of the resources allocated. The evaluation should look at the levels of stakeholders' participation through the different phases of the project, including feedback mechanisms and incorporation of observations.

- To what extent are ALERT partner agencies more systematic in their approach to operational preparedness?
- What is the emerging evidence of positive change (or where there is no change) that ALERT partner agencies and their staff are more competent in conducting preparedness activities?
- How effective was project delivery? What delivery mechanisms worked well and what did not work? What are the key lessons regarding implementation?
- To what extent did the project contribute to greater preparedness and response among local organisations, communities and governments?
- To what extent and in what ways has the project led to improved knowledge and understanding of best practices relating to disaster and emergency preparedness and response?

Efficiency (including value for money): This area should include a review of those elements that enable the implementation of activities (funds, infrastructure, staff, communication, coordination, financial control, partnerships, procedures, culture, planning, etc.) as well as a financial analysis of relevant areas of the expenses.

- Have resources been used efficiently? In general, do the results achieved justify the costs? Could the same results be attained with fewer resources?
- Were procurement, management and partnership arrangements appropriate to achieving the desired quality, quantity, and timeliness of outputs?
- **Value for money case study:** Does the ALERT Platform provide a value for money option for increasing emergency preparedness?

Sustainability:

- To what extent and in what ways have the benefits of the project become embedded?

- What contribution has the project made in strengthening global preparedness systems?
- In what ways has the project influenced institutional and policy environments?
- Within the established partnerships, to what extent have local capacities been supported and developed towards more preparedness?
 - How has the ALERT project been aligned with agencies' humanitarian approach, systems and procedures in partner agencies?

Note that evaluation questions will be further fine-tuned throughout the process to ensure they respond to the specific information needs of the ALERT team and other key stakeholders.

The ALERT Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Framework contain project learning indicators from which the evaluators may select some additional evaluation questions.

5. Proposed approach for the evaluation

- **Briefing**
- **Desk Reviews**

The process evaluation shall consist of a desk review of available project documents (listed in annex).

- **Interviews**

Interviews with the project teams, consortium and supporting partners; relevant actors including L/NNGOs, local government and donors in countries and at global level, country office staff, etc. shall be conducted.

Interviews with stakeholders from Kenya, Pakistan and Philippines shall be conducted in-country, while interviews with the ALERT team and relevant international NGOs, donors and networks at international level shall be conducted remotely (for example via Skype) unless opportunities arise for some face-to-face interviews.

Evaluators shall use as much as possible participatory methods for data collection. The list of organizations / agencies and persons to be met / interviewed will be finalised with the evaluators after submission of the detailed methodology.

- **Guiding Principles**

The following basic principles are expected to guide the further development of the methodology:

Participation: Allow for the meaningful participation of ALERT/Consortium partners staff, supporting partners, lead actors and others in the evaluation process.

Gender equality: The proposed approach should as far as possible collect views from both male and female staff of sector stakeholders who have been involved in ALERT.

Data triangulation: The evaluators will gather information through different complementary sources.

Vulnerable groups: inclusion of vulnerable groups, as a cross-cutting concern throughout its methodology and all deliverables, including the final report.

Localisation and Grand Bargain: Specify connection to World Humanitarian Summit / Grand Bargain localisation agenda: engaging NNGOs and LNGOs in owning/decision-making/oversight of the design and process, and evaluating the evaluations usefulness for them.

At the end of each in-country visit, the evaluator will present the preliminary findings from the document review and interviews to the ALERT team.

6. Evaluation consultant(s)

We are looking for a team of experienced evaluators, with preferably a principal consultant, who shall take the overall lead and responsibility, and a local consultant for each country (Kenya, Pakistan and Philippines). The principal consultant shall lead on the preparation of the methodology, undertake interviews at global level, and lead the writing of the overall evaluation report.

In case applicants want to propose an alternative team composition, they should justify the added-value of this team composition, and demonstrate that consultants in charge of data collection at country level have sufficient understanding of the country's context and humanitarian architecture.

The team should as far as possible be gender-balanced, combine international and national experts, and ideally participation of donor representative, and it should possess the following qualifications:

Essential:

- Demonstrated experience with evaluating processes, in preferably initiatives using software,
- Demonstrated experience in conducting evaluations for comparable programmes,
- Experience with emergency preparedness, emergency response, humanitarian programmes / projects, humanitarian cycle management and humanitarian architecture (the "humanitarian system"),
- Experience of designing and facilitating participatory workshop sessions,
- Solid understanding of humanitarian best practice,
- Excellent communication, writing and presentation skills in English.

Desirable:

- Fluency in relevant languages for the consultant collecting data in country
- Knowledge of the work of HelpAge International or other international NGOs
- Having attended security training
- Experience in software analytics

Section 10 in this ToR provides guidelines on the content of the proposal.

7. Schedule, logistics and deliverables.

Proposed timing

The general timeline below is tentative and shall be confirmed with the selected evaluators:

Submission of proposals	By 15 December 2017
Evaluation of proposals	By 18 December 2017
Approval of selected evaluators	By 20 December 2017
Inception meeting and signing of contract	By 12 January 2018
Literature review; preparation of methodology; interviews global level; preparation for country visits	By 22 January 2018
Final version of inception report	By 26 January 2018
Data collection and presentation of findings in Country 1, 2 and 3	By 16 February 2018
Submission of draft reports: one overall evaluation report, and a shorter country-specific report for each country	By 23 February 2018
Round of comment on draft reports (review should include a stakeholder workshop, debriefing of project manager).	By 05 March 2018
Submission of final reports	By 09 March 2018

Evaluators shall include in their proposals the number of days they intend to spend on each of the above activities (preparation of methodology, data collection, report writing and presentation of results, and specify how they will ensure stakeholders in engaged in the review).

Logistics

ALERT teams in countries, with support of relevant country office staffs, will be responsible for arranging accommodation and transport, and will assist the evaluator with the practical organisation of workshops, scheduling of interviews, etc.

Deliverables

Inception Report	Short inception report with a summary of the final methodology and detailed work plan as agreed during the inception meeting (to be signed off by the	26 January 2018
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	Evaluation Manager and ALERT Project Manager)	
Presentation of in-country findings and recommendations	Short reports on the findings and recommendations for each country: Pakistan, Philippines and Kenya	By 16 February 2018
A clear and concise overall evaluation report, including	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive summary that can be used as stand-alone document • Explanation and justification of used methodologies, including the perceived limitations • Findings from the document review • Documentation of findings from in-country visits and interviews at global level, including quotes (without identification of specific individuals) • Description and conclusions of the Value for money case study • General conclusions, including a clear and well-reasoned answer to the evaluation questions and recommendations • A learning plan should be included so that improvements can be made by current stakeholders to take forward in sustainability plans, and possible future stakeholders if interventions scale up (incl. sharing with donor for their future programming). • Appendices: ToRs and inception report with final work plan 	23 February 2018 (draft) 09 March 2018 (final version)

	<p>List of participants, interviewees and locations visited</p> <p>Interview notes and quotes</p> <p>Shorter country-specific evaluation reports</p> <p>Presentation of overall findings and recommendations to the whole ALERT team and other relevant HelpAge International staff</p> <p>Final overall and country-specific evaluation reports (in line with the above requirements)</p> <p>(to be signed off by the Evaluation Manager and ALERT Project Manager)</p>	
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8. Evaluation responsibilities and management arrangements

The ALERT Evaluation and Learning Officer Tiphaine Valois, will be the Evaluation Manager. She will be the first point of contact for the evaluators and ensure access to documents, people and other information needed to answer the evaluation questions. Together with the ALERT Project Manager, Saffi Jones, she will ensure the quality of the evaluation and adherence to HelpAge International's, START NETWORK and DEPP procedures and requirements.

The ALERT Evaluation and Learning Officer and ALERT Project Manager will select the team of evaluators, give input to the methodology during the inception meeting and approve later changes to evaluation work plan and budget. They will also give consolidated input and comments on draft documents and approve the final inception report, final evaluation reports and its corresponding management response.

The whole ALERT project team will also be involved in reviewing the draft evaluation reports and providing consolidated feedback to the evaluators.

ALERT consortium teams in countries, with support of relevant country office staffs, will provide logistical support during country visits. They can introduce the evaluator to supporting partners, and relevant stakeholders in country. The ALERT Evaluation and Learning Officer will support the evaluators in getting in contact with relevant INGOs, donors and networks from global level.

9. Dissemination plan and responsibilities for sharing and using the findings

Before the end of the country visits, the evaluators will share and discuss the preliminary evaluation results and initial recommendations with ALERT team and Consortium members.

The final evaluation reports will be in English according to a mutually agreed outline (see standard example in Appendix). In line with the START NETWORK's commitment to transparency and accountability, a copy of the final report will be published on START NETWORK's website and will be made available to project stakeholders.

The evaluators shall share with the ALERT team any recommendations in terms of the dissemination of findings that would emerge from the evaluation.

10. Process of the selection of the evaluators and expectations for the evaluation proposal

The proposal submitted by the evaluators will set out and describe how the evaluators will operationalize and carry out the evaluation, bringing refinements, specificity and elaboration to the ToR.

The evaluation of the consultants' offers will focus on the value for money criterion, with particular attention for the technical quality of the proposal and the experience of the proposed team (CV's). The selection of the evaluators will follow HelpAge International's policy and procedures. HelpAge International withholds the right to conduct interviews with one or more potential suppliers to seek further clarification on the submitted quotations, proposal and previous experiences of the potential evaluators.

The technical part of the proposal should minimally contain the following topics:

- The evaluators' understanding and interpretation of the ToR, including evaluation questions
- Detailed description of approach, methodology, tools and analysis, with a clear explanation of strategies to ensure the participation of ALERT Project staff, Consortium members and supporting partners, lead actors, local and national humanitarian agencies, INGOs and donors, other HelpAge International staff, etc.
- Overview of perceived risks and mitigation strategies
- Work plan detailing the timing of the assignment, including the proposed division of tasks between evaluators and their respective availabilities
- Proposed reporting format and outline

In addition, the following information should be provided:

- Total budget with a cost breakdown in days or hours spent and the related fees for the tasks (making the distinction for each evaluator). Local transportation should be covered within the daily rate for the evaluation and learning officers. In addition - if necessary - additional costs such as accommodations, flights and other forms of transport shall be estimated and included as a fixed budget.
- CVs of the proposed evaluators, including previous experience with similar assignments.

The selected evaluators are expected to be available to start immediately after their selection.

Applications should be submitted by e-mail to Tiphaine Valois (tiphaine.valois@helpage.org) and Saffi Jones (saffi.jones@helpage.org),

The deadline for submission is 15th of December at midnight UK time.

Any questions, remarks or requests for clarification can be sent to the above e-mail address.

Appendix 1: Recommended outline of an evaluation report

1. Cover page, clearly identifying the report as an evaluation and stating:

- Evaluation title
- Project title
- Geographical coverage: global; country(ies)
- Date that the evaluation report was finalised
- Evaluators name(s) and logo (if available)
- ALERT logo
- Appropriate recognition of institutional donor support.

2. Table of contents

3. Glossary

4. List of abbreviations.

5. Executive summary that can be used as a stand-alone document

6. Introduction, stating objectives of the evaluation and evaluation questions

7. The intervention and context

8. Methodology, including an indication of any perceived limitations of the evaluation

9. Presentation of the findings and their analysis

10. Conclusions

11. Learning and Recommendations

12. Appendices:

- Terms of reference
- Evaluation program (main features of data and activities carried out).
- A list of interviewees (name, function and working environment) and places visited.
- List of documents and bibliography used.
- Details on composition of evaluation team (names, expertise, role/working environment).
- Link to Methodological appendices:
 - The evaluation proposal
 - Evaluation instruments such as questionnaires and interview guides
 - Data collected

Annex 2

Document and Software Review

A review of the software, relevant literature and research and ALERT project documentation.

The key documents for this evaluation process include:

- The approved ALERT proposal
- ALERT internal document outlining roles and responsibilities of ALERT team and supporting partners
- ALERT Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEL) framework
- Project's learning documentation (workshop reports, Roll out After Action Review report, and any other relevant documents)
- ALERT Project documents including training materials,
- Baseline Report,
- Guidelines for the START NETWORK - DEPP projects,
- Internal Project reports (internal ALERT reporting, and reporting from project supporting partners), including relevant annexes,
- Project workplans,
- Relevant minutes / reports of meetings, conferences and events
- Relevant communication materials, videos, etc.

Appendix 3: Indicators for preparedness activities (Harvard Humanitarian Initiative’s Guidance for DEPP project-level final evaluations)

	Individual (Staff) Preparedness	Organizational Preparedness	Community Preparedness
Inputs and activities [1a]	Total budget (in GBP) devoted to individual preparedness	Total budget (in GBP) devoted to organizational preparedness	Total budget (in GBP) devoted to community preparedness
	-types of activities implemented & # of each	-types of activities implemented & # of each	-types of activities implemented & # of each
Outputs [1a]	# of humanitarian staff benefiting from individual preparedness activities (disaggregate by National vs UK and by country) (disaggregate by local/NNGO and INGO)	# of staff / # of organizations benefiting from organizational preparedness activities (disaggregate by National vs UK and by country) (disaggregate by local/NNGO and INGO)	# of people trained (disaggregate by community members vs humanitarian staff vs government and by country) # of communities benefiting from community preparedness activities
Outcomes [1c]	Change in individual level preparedness [1c]	Change in level of organizational preparedness [ex preparedness plans in place et] [1b]	Change in access to early warning alerts (disaggregate by community members vs humanitarian staff vs government and by country) [1b]
	Behaviour change in beneficiaries ² [1b]		Change in community level preparedness /vulnerability / resilience [1b]
			Behaviour change in households related to

² Behaviours related to preparedness and ability to respond to disasters and emergencies. We want to leave this open to each project to tailor based on the project activities (but examples include timeliness of decision-making, taking initiatives, developing tools, communication with team etc).

				preparedness [1b]
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Behaviours related to preparedness and ability to respond to disasters and emergencies. We want to leave this open to each project to tailor based on the project activities (but examples include timeliness of decision-making, taking initiatives, developing tools, communication with team etc).

Indicators for capacity building (Harvard Humanitarian Initiative's Guidance for DEPP project-level final evaluations)

	Individual (staff) Capacity Building	Organizational Capacity Building	Systems Level (ex Early warning systems)
Inputs and activities [1a]	Total budget (in GBP) devoted to individual capacity building	Total budget (in GBP) devoted to organizational capacity building	Total budget (in GBP) devoted to systems level capacity building
	-types ³ of activities implemented & # of each	-types ² of activities implemented & # of each	-types ² of activities implemented & # of each
Outputs [1a]	# of people trained (disaggregate by National vs UK and by country) (disaggregate by local/NNGO and INGO)	# of staff / # of organizations benefiting from organizational level capacity building (disaggregate by National vs UK and by country) (disaggregate by local/NNGO and INGO)	# of people trained (disaggregate by community members vs humanitarian staff vs government and by country) # of communities benefiting from capacity building
Outcomes	Knowledge change on core humanitarian subjects and/or technical skills (use core humanitarian competencies framework) ⁴ [1c]	Change in organizational response capacity [1b]	Change in household disaster risk knowledge [1c]
	Knowledge change on ageing, disability and other cross cutting issues [1c]	Change in organizational capacity on ageing, disability, and other cross-cutting issues [includes changes in policy] [1b, 3b]	Behaviour change in households related to preparedness [1b]
	Behaviour change in beneficiaries (staff) [1b]		

³ Use DEPP Learning project Capacity mapping exercise definitions

⁴ Even if other competencies frameworks have been used, I would suggest in the final evaluation to try to compare against the core humanitarian competencies framework for consistency

